

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

INFO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 017378 TOSEC 010185

EXDIS FOR DAY IN SEC'S PARTY, ROME FOR AMB LODGE'S OFFICE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, LE

SUBJECT: VATICAN STATEMENT ON LEBANESE CRISIS

REF: BEIRUT 00703 (BEING REPEATED SEPTTEL TO SECRETARY)

1. WE AGREE WITH EMBASSY BEIRUT'S SUGGESTION THAT VATICAN BE APPROACHED WITH SUGGESTION THAT POPE MAKE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC STATEMENT ON LEBANESE SITUATION, BUT HAVE FOLLOWING RESERVATIONS;

(A) WE DO NOT RPT NOT WISH TO LINK IN OUR APPROACH A STATEMENT BY THE POPE TO THE STATEMENT MADE BY MARONITE PATRIARCH KHURAYSH. THE FEW EXCERPTS OF PATRIARCH'S APPEAL AVAILABLE TO US HERE SUGGEST THAT IT MAY BE TOO ONE-SIDED IN PORTRAYING THE CONFESSIONAL SEPARATION AND THE CHRISTIANS STANDING ALONE AGAINST AN ATTACK "WAGED BY THOUSANDS OF FOREIGN SOLDIERS WHO HAVE ENTERED LEBANON

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SPREADING DEATH AND RUIN." (EMBASSY BEIRUT PLEASE CABLE

FULL TEXT OF KHURAYSH STATEMENT TO DEPARTMENT AND ROME).

(B) WE ARE ALSO RELUCTANT TO SUGGEST THAT THE POPE SPECIFICALLY SUPPORT PRESIDENT FRANGIE'S EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT A CEASEFIRE AND A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. FRANGIE BACKED AWAY FROM WHAT MAY HAVE BEEN AN AGREEMENT WITH THE SYRIANS ON A PREVIOUS OCCASION, AND IT IS NOT BEYOND BELIEF HE COULD DO SO AGAIN IN THIS INSTANCE. IN ANY EVENT, WE UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS NOT RPT NOT CHARACTERISTIC OF HIS HOLINESS TO BE SO SPECIFIC.

2. FOR ROME (AMBASSADOR LODGE'S OFFICE): PLEASE APPROACH VATICAN WITH SUGGESTION THAT HIS HOLINESS CONSIDER ISSUING A PUBLIC STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THOSE LEADERS IN LEBANON WHO ARE WORKING HARD TO PRESERVE THE JANUARY 22 CEASEFIRE AND TO PLACE THE COUNTRY ON THE PATH OF RECONCILIATION LEADING TO A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT.

3. YOU SHOULD NOTE THAT PRESIDENT FRANGIE'S OFFICE ANNOUNCED EARLIER IN THAT DAY, AS A RESULT OF A MEDIATION EFFORT BY SYRIA, THAT "AN AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED AMONG ALL THE PARTIES BASED ON A TOTAL POLITICAL SETTLEMENT OF THE CRISIS IN ALL ITS ASPECTS." THE ANNOUNCEMENT ADDED THAT AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED TO ESTABLISH A LEBANESE-SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN HIGHER MILITARY COMMITTEE, PLUS A NUMBER OF SUPERVISORY SUBCOMMITTEES, TO PRODUCE A CEASEFIRE, RESTORE NORMAL LIFE, AND SUPERVISE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRUCE ARRANGEMENTS.

4. YOU SHOULD FURTHER EXPLAIN, HOWEVER, THAT IT REMAINS UNCLEAR WHETHER THE LEADERS OF THE MILITANT CHRISTIAN FIGHTING GROUPS HAVE AGREED TO THE ARRANGEMENTS ACCEPTED BY PRESIDENT FRANGIE. THERE IS A RISK THAT THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY WILL REMAIN DIVIDED AND PLACE IN JEOPARDY THE TENUOUS UNDERSTANDING DEVELOPED LARGELY AT SYRIAN-INSPIRED URGINGS.

5. YOU SHOULD ADD THAT, ALTHOUGH THE CHRISTIAN MILITANTS MAY HAVE BEEN ELATED BY SOME OF THEIR SUCCESSES IN THE JANUARY ROUND OF FIGHTING, IT IS OUR JUDGMENT THAT IN THE
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LAST SEVERAL DAYS THE BALANCE OF MILITARY FORCES HAS SHIFTED PERCEPTABLY IN FAVOR OF THE FORCES OPPOSING THE CHRISTIANS. THUS IT IS PRUDENT TO ASSUME THAT A BREAKDOWN IN THE PRESENT AGREEMENT ENDORSED BY FRANGIE WILL NOT ONLY PRODUCE AN OUTBURST OF FIGHTING EVEN MORE INTENSE THAN IN THE PAST BUT WILL DIMINISH STILL FURTHER THE CHANCES OF A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT THAT WOULD PROTECT THE LONG-TERM SECURITY OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN A UNITED

LEBANON.

6. YOU SHOULD EXPLAIN TO THE VATICAN THAT WE BELIEVE IT
WOULD BE HELPFUL IF HIS HOLINESS WOULD CAST ANY STATEMENT
HE MIGHT MAKE IN THE DIRECTION OF URGING THE CHRISTIANS
TO UNITE THEMSELVES BEHIND THOSE WHO ARE TRYING TO
BRING ABOUT AN END TO THE FIGHTING AND TO IMPLEMENT A

POLITICAL SETTLEMENT ENABLING THE COMMUNITIES IN LEBANON
TO LIVE IN PEACE TOGETHER.

7. YOU SHOULD ADD OUR CONVICTION THAT, ESPECIALLY IN
THE IMMEDIATE PERIOD AHEAD, WHILE EFFORTS ARE BEING
MADE TO CONSOLIDATE THE AGREEMENT, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT
ALL FRIENDS OF LEBANON DO WHAT THEY CAN, PRIVATELY AND
PUBLICLY WHEN IT IS HELPFUL, TO SUPPORT THE PEACE-MAKERS.
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